MUSEUM ON MAIN STREET
A Museum Of County Life

IMPRESSIONS

WASHTENAW COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWLETTER • SEPTEMBER 1999

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SUSAN CEE WINEBERG

WCHS Mourns The Death Of Editor Alice Ziegler

I regret to inform our readers that our beloved editor, Alice Ziegler, died June 22, 1999 from cancer at the age of 71. This was Alice's 25th year of service to the society as Editor. In the past she also served as Recording Secretary and handled our Knapp's points for many years. Alice was well enough to attend the 'sneak preview' of the museum on May 23rd. She lived to see a lifelong dream become a reality and we are grateful for that. I now have the awesome task of taking over the editorship of the *Impressions*. Alice's shoes are difficult to fill so please bear with me.

Photo by Lawrence Ziegler
Alice Ziegler on her birthday, 1987.

Before her death I was able to talk with Alice at length about the society and her role in it. She began by detailing the scope of the *Impressions* in the 1940s, which consisted of scholarly papers and was overseen by Geneva

Continued on page 6.

KAREN KOYKKA O'NEAL

Sneak Preview A Huge Success

WCHS celebrated May 22 and 23 as a 'sneak preview' of coming attractions at the Museum on Main Street. We celebrated four very special donors by naming rooms in their honor: Elizabeth M. Dusseau, Doris Anna Bach, Edith Staebler Kempf and Margaret Dow Towsley. We celebrated donors of $10,000 or more with plaques next to the Museum's front walk. Those who donated $1000 were celebrated with a picket in our fence. And we celebrated each and every donation in a donor book.

Docents were available to talk about the most important artifact—the restoration of the Museum house itself. A short video showing the house moving from Wall Street to Main Street reminded us of how far we've come in our dream to have a museum.

A few of the Society's most treasured artifacts were on display: Ann Allen's bible, a law book signed by John Allen, the signature quilt that was created for us as a fund-raiser, a crazy quilt from the 1880s featuring the signatures of pioneer families, the Clark-Chapin piano (the first west of Detroit), memorabilia from the world wars and some photographs and history about the families who have lived in the house.

The Museum Shop was open for business. Our three travelling exhibits were displayed. One corner was devoted to activities for children. The flowers in the garden put on their best show. The rose bush and poppy plants that were plantings from when the house was on Wall Street chose that weekend to bloom. A Rumsey and a Kellogg relative even attended!

If you were one of the 500 or so who came through the front door that weekend, we hope you enjoyed not only the refreshments—foods that might have been served in the 1830s—but also came away with a glimpse of what this museum might offer in the future.

1999-2000 Officers Elected

At the June 16th Annual meeting, Pauline Walters was elected President. Judy Chrisman continues as Recording Secretary and Patricia W. Creal as Treasurer. Susan Wineberg, now Immediate Past President, will serve as Editor of the *Washtenaw Impressions*. Elected to three-year terms on the board were Lisa Black, Nancy Bryk, Karen O'Neal, and Peter Rocco. Rosemarion Blake presented Karen O'Neal with a hand embroidered sign of her name which will hang in the second floor work room. The Board unanimously approved naming this room to honor Karen for her ten years of hard work to open the museum.

At a board meeting held on July 14th, Virginia Hills and Harriet Birch were voted Vice-President and Corresponding Secretary respectively.

New Directors-At-Large Appointed

Terry Brinkman (a nephew of Alice Ziegler), Ralph Beebe, and Julie Creal Goodridge were approved as Directors-at-Large.

Terry was born and raised in Nebraska and worked for the Historic District Commission of Des Moines from 1995-1996. He has degrees in Geography and Planning and currently works in the Planning Division of Washtenaw County. Terry has fond memories of visiting Ann Arbor and his Aunt Alice every summer. The tours they took to local museums were very positive experiences for him.

Ralph retired after 20 years as the Theater House Manager of the Power Center and staffed the front of the house for Hill, Rackham and Lydia Mendelssohn. A native of Evanston Ill., he came to UM in 1951 and graduated with a Masters Degree in Theater and TV Production. After being in the service, he returned to Ann Arbor in 1966 where he has lived ever since.

Julie Creal Goodridge, daughter of Board Member and Treasurer Patty Creal, was raised in Ann Arbor. She attended Kenyon College and the UM Law School. She has practiced law for many years in Milan with her father Robert Creal. In March 1999 she was appointed by Governor Engler to be Judge of the 15th District Court.

We welcome all our new Directors-at-large!

PAT THOMPSON

Garden Report

As many of you have observed, I began in early spring to continue the work of Ella Grenier whose dedication created the foundation for our turn-of-the-century gardens befitting the new Main Street site. I have been busy researching and finding historically accurate plants, establishing and renovating beds and doing regular garden maintenance.

We know that one of the owners of the house in the 1890s, Charles Greiner, listed his occupation as 'gardener' in the city directory. We hope he would approve of the Rose of Sharon, Van Houtte spirea, arborvitae, hollyhocks and heliotrope, native ferns and wildflowers, and oriental lilies such as the magnificent "Gold Band" lily so popular at that time. From the soapwort by the back door whose leaves make a soapy lather (I tried it. It really works!) to the Gallica and Damask roses, there is a broad spectrum of period plantings to fulfill our goals of education and appreciation of the past. Perhaps we can even help in the preservation of botanical treasures.

Another project undertaken this summer was the identification of plants saved from the original Wall Street site. Tom and Sylvia Taylor, rose experts associated with the American Rose Society, identified our rose as Rosa blanda or "smooth, wild rose," one of our native Michigan roses! It blooms in a spring flush of innumerable small pink flowers with yellow stamens and has smooth stems with few thorns. Next year I'll endeavor to have the lilac and poppy fully identified as well.

As the seasons progress, I will share the fascinating histories of some of our plants and alert you to bloom times. Future plans include an herb-vegetable-cutting garden on the embankment and vines draping the fence! Thank you to the many people who have donated plants, services, and funds that keep this project going. The dual program of moving forward while maintaining present plantings requires much time and work. Lisa Johnson has been a regular volunteer but more hands are needed. Please contact Pauline Walters or me (663-8976) if you can help. Meanwhile, your appreciation of our efforts does help. So, remember, the garden is always changing and drop by often!

Around The County

Chelsea Historical Society: The Depot Museum is open 1-3 P.m. Saturdays or by appointment, 475-7047.

Dexter Area Historical Society: Museum at 3443 Inverness St., 426-2519 Hours vary.

Pittsfield Society: The new society is seeking suggestions for speakers and programs. Contact them at P.O. Box 6013, Ann Arbor, MI 48106.

Saline Historical Society: Depot Museum open 10-2 Saturdays or by appointment. The new Rentschler Farm Museum is open Saturdays from 10-2 in the early fall. Contact Wayne Clements at 429-9621.

Ypsilanti Historical Society: Museum, 220 N. Huron open 2-4 Thursdays, Saturdays and Sundays. Archives open 9-noon Monday-Friday. Call 482-4990.

Ypsilanti Heritage Foundation, 102 N. Wallace, 485-3683. Holds bi-monthly programs and sponsors homes tour during Heritage Festival in August. Publishes newsletter five times a year.

Highlights Of The Annual Meeting

The Annual Meeting was held June 16th in the Pittsfield Union Grange Hall on Ann Arbor-Saline Road, a rapidly urbanizing section of Washtenaw County. Herman Koehn spoke briefly about the history of the Grange and presented us with a 20-page history written by Shannan Gibb-Randall, a student in the Landscape Architecture program at UM. The Grange Movement started after the Civil War as an organization to provide education for farming families, to improve their economy and also be a political and legislative force for farm communities. The accomplishments of the movement include the break-up of the railroad monopolies, the establishment of rural free delivery, improved rural highways and the improvement of rural schools. The Grange also served as an important vehicle for women since they enjoyed more rights and responsibilities than in American society in general. Today the Pittsfield Grange No. 882 (started in 1901), is the only one left in Washtenaw County and is one of only 100 left in Michigan.

Speakers Discuss Sprawl and Land Preservation Issues

Peter Kumble of Land Ethics, Inc. of Dexter spoke to members of the Society and the Pittsfield Grange on issues of rural preservation and managed growth. Funded by the Great Lakes Protection Fund, they have been charged to study ways to develop criteria for all townships in Michigan that want to manage growth, not scare it away. Formerly based in Washington DC and Annapolis, he and his partners Elizabeth Brabec (a Professor at UM in the School of Natural Resources) and Chip Smith have applied lessons learned from studying the Potomac River and Jonesborough, TN to the issues now facing Washtenaw County. Although they were trained as landscape architects, they now try to focus on land preservation rather than landscaping in the more traditional sense.

Slides were shown of their previous work to preserve views of the Potomac River while allowing new residential development. The Mount Vernon Ladies Association and the Trust for Public Lands (TPL) hired them to figure out how to preserve the views from Mt. Vernon without prohibiting new development across the river in Charles County MD. Five ideas were developed from this work: (1) preserve the forest; (2) develop design guidelines for new roads and road alignment (winding roads can't be seen); (3) use construction techniques which limit the amount of land clearance. They developed the concept of *site fingerprinting* which recommends clearing only the area needed for the house and a small area around it, not all the trees on a site. (4) Use earth colors for houses and roofs rather than white, which stands out in a green forest. (5) Avoid site development along the water edge where erosion could be a problem.

Their next project was in Jonesborough, TN where people were worried about losing their small town charm and becoming another Johnson City with an unattractive commercial strip. They developed design guidelines here for franchise architecture, signage, and parking lots which minimize their main features while still providing the services they sell. This was done through a combination of reducing the size of signs, berming parking lots and having an attractive water drainage system. A planted median down the center of the main highway was also critical to achieving this goal. These ideas were derived from many public meetings held with local residents asking what they would like to see the town look like.

A local example can be seen in Dexter where they are based. Dexter is changing rapidly, especially as you enter from Ann Arbor. The design of a new supermarket according to new design guidelines, if adopted by the town, is a way to preserve some of the historic character of this small town. The design of the façade of a large supermarket can be made to look like a series of smaller buildings, for example, to lessen the impact of a huge superstore. Another suggestion is to have the supermarket near the road with the parking behind, which more resembles the façade of a 19th century downtown. If developers understand that these new rules apply to all new development, they won't be scared away and will still build in your town.

Land Ethics is currently working with Scio Township and Peninsula Township near Traverse City to develop such guidelines for these communities. Their goal is to develop guidelines which could be applied throughout the state and to foster public support of it. Right now, the politics of preservation is not grass roots based, hence the failure of the PDR initiative last fall. The PDR in Peninsula Township, which passed narrowly in 1994, has been very successful and over 7000 acres have been preserved with no job loss. The development of guidelines will eventually result in a stronger sense of preservation for townships and perhaps lead to many adopting some kind of protective ordinance. Meanwhile, another big goal of theirs is to make Detroit alive again. This is a huge task, but if successful, would result in less building on the fringes of the city, and thus contain some of the sprawl, which is caused by the decline of Detroit as a major urban magnet.

September Sponsors

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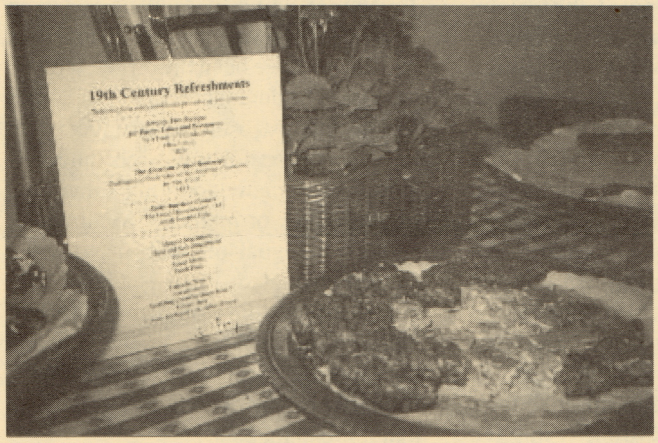
Highlights Of Museum Dedication

Photos by Lars Bjorn

BELOW: Crowds line up to enter the Museum after the ribbon cutting. (Top)

Pauline Walters receives gavel from outgoing president Susan Wineberg at Annual Meeting. (Middle)

Jennifer Flores dedicates the Margaret Dow Towsley room in honor of her aunt. (Bottom)



ABOVE: Rep. Liz Brater, President Susan Wineberg, Karen O'Neal and Mayor Ingrid Shelton cut the ribbon of the Museum with tailor's shears from the 1830s. (Top)

19th century refreshments were served. (Middle)

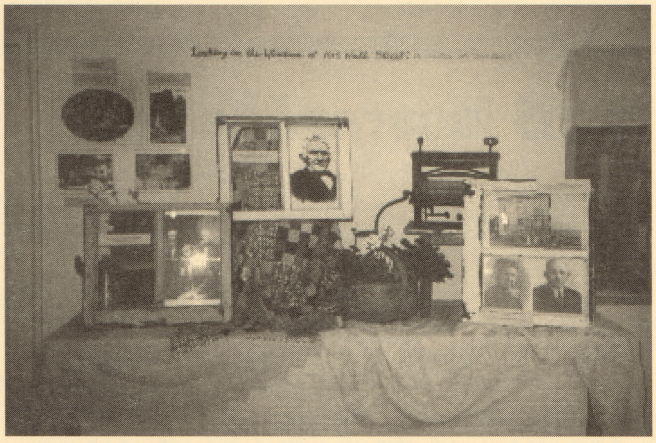
Elizabeth M. Dusseau unveils the hand-embroidered sign dedicating her room. (Bottom)

And Annual Meeting

BELOW: Karen O'Neal receives hand-embroidered sign for room named in her honor at the Annual Meeting. (Top)

David Oakley, descendant of Charles Kellogg who built our house, presents the Society with gifts at the opening ceremony. (Middle)

Thelma Graves and Karen O'Neal, the two members who began the Museum. (Bottom)



ABOVE: Vice President Ina Hanel and former President Pat Austin greet visitors. (Top)

Display of histories of the former residents of the Museum building. (Middle)

Patricia Black dedicates the Edith Staebler Kempf room in honor of her mother. (Bottom)

Peter and Rita Heydon, major supporters of the Museum.

Collections Chair Judy Chrisman and Professor Ted Ligibel, our emcee, share a moment at the ribbon cutting.

Joe and Karen O'Neal, major supporters of the Museum.

WCHS Mourns The Death Of Editor Alice Ziegler

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Smyth and Karl Guthe. Lela Duff later took over in the 1960s but only one volume of the *Impressions* was published in that decade! When Hazel Proctor became involved in the early 1970s, slide talks began to replace the formal papers and a chatty newsletter was written by Ralph and Lydia Muncy, descendants of Chelsea pioneers.

Hazel Proctor wanted a real newsletter and asked Tom Lacy (of the Drury/Lacy Advertising Agency) to convince Alice to do it. Hazel knew of Alice's writing skills from her five years of articles on school and church affairs for the *Ann Arbor News* (1950-55) and from her high school English teacher Helen Brady Mann who also worked at the News. Tom took her out to lunch at the Town Club (at the time Alice wasn't even a member of the WCHS) and made his pitch. In October of 1974, Alice became the new editor of the *Washtenaw Impressions*. Hazel found the bicycle logo and Drury/Lacy designed the masthead. In those early days, they also did all the typesetting and printing for free. Since that date Alice did not miss one issue.

Alice developed an avid interest in history because of her own pioneer roots in Superior Township and also because she was surrounded by adults and had few playmates living as she did on a lonely road. Her brother was four years younger and she was often just with parents and grandparents. The catalyst came around 1940 when the County Superintendent for one-room schools asked kids to write a school history. Alice collected and put into notebooks many items of historical interest. She also met a lot of nice, interesting people and this carried over into her work at the *Ann Arbor News*. In 1966 she published a history of the Townline School.

She also told an amusing story about Howell Taylor, a former President and for many years after 1930 the custodian of the WCHS artifacts. The Speechly sisters had given some gold rings and expensive jewelry to the society and President Katherine Groomes wanted him to rent a safe deposit box. He didn't want to since he felt his Chinese strongbox was adequate, but after much nagging he finally rented one. No one looked into it, however, until after he died. Much to everyone's surprise, the only thing found in the safe deposit box was the payment receipt! When we re-opened our safe deposit box a few years ago, Alice was worried it would be a repeat performance.

Alice was a quiet person, hardworking and modest, and never one to be aggressive or stand out. But she told me that when she became pregnant while working for the *News*, she made trips to Jackson, Detroit and even Toledo to find non-revealing clothes to wear to work. When she finally left (six months into her pregnancy) she had become a pioneer, being the first pregnant woman to be allowed to work beyond three months.

Alice has been recognized for her work in the past. In 1994 The Ann Arbor Historic District Commission named her *"Preservationist of the Year."* Last August Don Faber of the *Ann Arbor News* wrote a wonderful piece about her as part of his series on volunteers.

Alice will be greatly missed. Her work as Editor for 25 years will stand as a testimonial to her life. The family has asked that contributions be made to the Society or to Ann Arbor Hospice. The Board of Directors voted at its July meeting to honor her with a plaque near the sidewalk entrance to the Museum and to dedicate this issue of the *Impressions* to her.

Wish List For The Museum

President Pauline Walters is searching for a computer person to help her convert our membership list to MS Access. She also needs someone to hook up the dot matrix printer.

For our Museum building, we need an antique doorknocker or old-fashioned "ding a ling" bell so that visitors can make themselves known. We also need an electric broom to clean our wooden floors.

Our gardener, Pat Thompson, could use some muscle to help her move stones. Anyone with an edger (and willing to use it) would be much appreciated.

Karen O'Neal has a long list of wishes for the museum. ***We need...***

- To paint the exterior of the building and estimates are $6,000 for labor alone. We need to buy the paint as well.
- A burglar alarm system.
- Lights for the two front posts and for the parking lot.
- To seal the asphalt in the parking lot.
- To repair and re-hang our storm windows and doors.
- Funding for a permanent exhibit.
- Funding for a part-time director.
- Help with exhibit and display materials.

Anyone wishing to help with any of the above *"wishes"* please contact President Walters, 662-9092 or PopoWalt@aol.com.

Geddes Letters Come Back To Washtenaw

In May of 1999 I received a letter from Stuart Goldman, a postal collector in Massachusetts. He had recently purchased a large group of letters written by John Geddes to his brother William in Pennsylvania, describing in great detail his activities in Washtenaw County in the 1820s-40s. Mr. Goldman wanted to find a buyer so that the collection could stay together. I am happy to report that Russell Bidlack has purchased this collection and is now happily transcribing some 48 letters with rich details about early pioneer life. He also has the first plat map of Ann Arbor Township and land grants of 1827 signed by President John Quincy Adams. Several unique postal (straight line) cancellations were purchased from Dr. Bidlack by retired professor Frank Whitehouse, the expert on the postal history of the county. We will keep our readers posted on any new details which Dr. Bidlack discovers.

Certificates Offered

Certificates, framed if desired, are offered free of charge, by WCHS to organizations, businesses, churches, schools etc., for milestone anniversaries. Call the Society office for details.

Artifacts To Donate

Anyone wishing to donate an artifact to WCHS may contact Judy Chrisman, collections chair at 734-769-7859 or by mail, 1800 Dexter Ave., Ann Arbor, MI 48103.

Pancake Supper Will Feature Kellogg Flour

Instead of a Sunday program in September, the WCHS will host a Pancake Supper on Saturday evening, September 18, 1999 from 4-7 PM. It will be held in a tent in the parking lot of the Museum at 500 N. Main St. We will be using flour from the original Kellogg Mill (New Hope Mills) in Moravia, New York. This mill was constructed in 1823, just before the Kellogg family emigrated to Michigan and built our Museum Building. The mill is still using the power of waterfalls to grind the grain after 175 years. Their pancake mix will be available for sale.

There will be a charge of $5.00 for adults and $3.00 for children. Donations to the Museum Fund are also encouraged. In addition to pancakes and syrup, there will be sausages, applesauce, coffee, tea, and milk. Take-out will be available. Call Pauline Walters at 662-9092 or e-mail her at popowalt@aol.com for more details.

"What's It?" Game & Loan Boxes

WCHS offers traveling exhibits of small artifacts set up as a humorous "What's It?" game to schools for children and another for adults. They are available for classes and meetings.

Two Loan Boxes, developed with funds from the Ann Arbor Area Community Foundation, are available to teachers for a $15 rental fee. One box deals with **Life Before Electricity** and contains artifacts which children can touch, a teaching text, posters, and books. The second box, **"Hats to Spats"** explores clothing development both in general and in Ann Arbor and Washtenaw County with appropriate artifacts and books.

For information contact Sally Silvennoinen, 734-971-5086.

Thanks To Our Volunteers & Donors

Three cheers for a new volunteer, Karen Fors. She "restored" the Society's old and rusty card table with paint and a new vinyl top. This table survived years of abuse, serving as a desk during construction. Now it is beautiful and has a new life in the office. Karen also painted the front steps and they are beautiful. She has helped out with several others items that needed fixing as well. Thank you to Enid Gosling for the donation of a refrigerator for the basement. We are putting it to good use. And thanks to Judy Calhoun for helping the President on numerous occasions.

Art Fair Parking Gleans Over $600

Board Member Pete Rocco again did yeoman service in organizing volunteers to park cars during Art Fair. Great Lakes National Bank let us use one of their parking lots during non-business hours and we were able to make $662.00. Thanks to all who helped including Pauline Walters, Patty Creal, Karen Simpson, Louisa Pieper, Rosemarion Blake, Terry Brinkman, Esther Warzynski, Jay Snyder, Elsie Dyke and Susan Wineberg.

How To Join

Send name, address and phone number with check or money order payable to WCHS c/o Patty Creal, Treasurer, P.O. Box 3336, Ann Arbor, MI Arbor 48106-3336.

Annual Dues are individual, $15, couple/family $25; student or senior (60+), $10; senior couple, $19; business/association, $50; patron $100. For information call 734-662-9092.

Next Month's Program

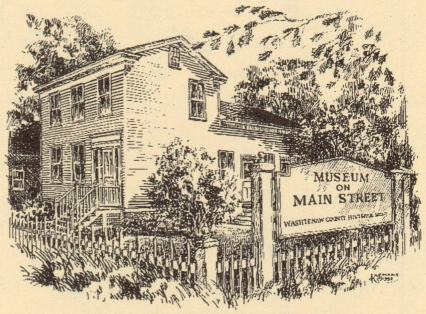
Our next program will be held at 2 P.M. October 17 at the Bentley Library. It will feature Professor David Lewis from the UM School of Business speaking on *Henry Ford: Legend, Legacy and Local Landmarks*. Members will receive post cards in the mail with further details.

Beach Ball Fundraiser Underway

By now most of you have received our latest fundraiser in the mail. We hope you enjoy your mini beach balls and will send in your checks to help us "Keep the Ball Rolling." Special thanks to Treasurer Patty Creal for conceiving and executing this idea. Also many thanks to those who helped with the mailing: Pauline Walters, Harriet Birch, Louisa Pieper, Judy Chrisman and Ann DeFreytas, who has also been helping with filing.

Knapp's Points New Coordinator

Esther Warzynski has volunteered to collect our Knapp's Points. We have over 102,000 points and we need another 9,000 points by December 30th to purchase acid free boxes to house our clothing collection. Anyone who eats at Bill Knapp's Restaurants may request a yellow points slip from the cashier. One point is given for each dollar spent. Please send points to Esther at 1520 Martha Ave., Ann Arbor, MI 48103.



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